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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: MUMBAI TERROIST ATTACKS

¶1. Summary and Comment: Mainstream English and Bangla-language newspapers across the political and religious spectrum condemned the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Editorials generally focused on two issues. First, most editorials called on India to refrain from blaming neighboring countries before completing a thorough investigation. Many editorials noted that following previous terrorist attacks, the Indian government and media were quick to blame Islamic terrorists based in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Generally, however, following an investigation, the Indians concluded that domestic non-Islamic groups were actually responsible for some of these attacks and not foreigners. Second, many media outlets called for regional action to effectively combat terrorism in South Asia. Regional coordination could create a platform for South Asian countries to better combat terrorist activities. End summary and comment.

¶2. A selection of media reaction follows:

¶A. "REGIONAL UNITY AGAINST TERRORISM," an editorial in the November 29 anti-West-leaning Bangla daily INQILAB:

"Many compare the Mumbai attack to 9/11.... India has been the victim of terrorist attacks from time to time. In most instances, a domestic or home grown terrorist organization claims responsibility. Still, the government blames neighboring countries. Soon after the Mumbai attack, an Indian terrorist group named 'Deccan Mujahideen' claimed responsibility. Despite this claim, the Indian PM stated that no neighboring country would be forgiven. The editorial writer said that people should refrain from blaming neighbors on the basis of only speculation or a grudge. If they do, the main culprits can escape. As all countries in this region are victims of terrorism, engaging in this sort of blame game might hamper the economic development of South Asia instead ending terrorist activities. Mutual cooperation and coordination are needed to curb terrorism in this region.... India and other South Asian countries must be cautious against international plots to destroy the prospect of economic development in India and the region as a result of domestic terrorism and poor relations between neighbors."

¶B. "ANOTHER TERRORIST ATTACK IN MUMBAI," another editorial in the November 28 anti-West Bangla daily INQILAB:

"Whoever is responsible for this attack, even if they are Muslims, should be immediately identified and brought to justice. Special attention should be given in the area so that stereotypes, speculation or baseless suspicion does not influence the legal process... India also should find out who the real culprits behind this attack are and identify the 'modus operandi' of this attack."

¶C. "THIS ATTACK IS AGAINST HUMANITY," editorial in the November 28

pro-Jamaat Bangla daily NAYA DIGANTA:

"It has been reported that the Deccan Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the attacks. We have seen in the past that captured terrorists often blame other groups in order to deflect attention away from the real culprits. In India, the authorities frequently classify attacks as 'Islamic terrorism' and blame Muslim groups. But Islam and terrorism are totally contradictory. Islam is a religion of peace. There is no place for terrorism in Islam, and Islam condemns terrorism severely. In the Malegaon terrorist incident on September 29, efforts were made to blame Muslims. Later, it was discovered during the investigation that a Hindu extremist group was involved. A colonel working in the Indian Army supplied explosives to that group. Most astonishing is that the person who discovered the truth, Hemant Karkare, the head of the Anti-terrorist Squad, was killed in the latest Mumbai attack. The mystery behind this should be solved."

1D. "UNITED EFFORTS NEEDED TO CURB TERRORISM," editorial in the November 28 pro-BNP Bangla daily AMAR DESH:

"For the past several months, India has been a regular target for terrorist attacks. In the past, the Indians instantly blamed the Pakistan intelligence agency, ISI. Recently, the Indian media has also accused Bangladeshis of engaging in terrorist activities. We have consistently asked India not to blame others without evidence. Instead, coordination among South Asian nations is required to eliminate the root of terrorism. It should also be kept in mind that the terrorist activities are not one-dimensional but multi-dimensional. The Maharashtra police probe reveals that an extremist Hindu organization, Avinaba Bharat, is directly involved

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in many terrorist attacks in India. In Assam, Boro separatists are responsible for violence. The degree that Delhi's policy makers are responsible for increased terrorist activities should also be examined. Our position is that terrorism has no ethnic or religious identity. "

1E. "NO MORE BONFIRE OF CIVILIZATIONS," editorial in the November 28 anti-fundamentalist and pro-Awami League Bangla daily SHAMOKAL:

"In terms of planning and implementation, the Mumbai violence can only be compared to the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. The magnitude of this violence seems incredible but the question arises after every violent act: Why is there no effective security system? This violence will not achieve political or any other goals but the terrorists are desperate. Terrorism breeds suspicion and mistrust among the states. The terrorists must be defeated in every corner and be isolated from the society and state."

1F. "DANGEROUS TERRORIST ATTACK IN THE CITY OF MUMBAI," an editorial in the November 28 pro-Awami League SANGBAD editorial:

"The Mumbai attack is another reminder that united efforts by South Asian countries against terrorism are essential. Without eliminating terrorism, democratic political systems and the lives of the people are not safe."

1G. "TERRORIST ATTACK IN MUMBAI," editorial in the November 29 anti-fundamentalist and pro-Awami League Bangla daily JANAKANTHA:

"Around the world people do not support terrorism. We also do not support it. So terrorism cannot be a part of a democratic environment... If terrorism cannot be controlled, the democratic political system and peace are not safe. All countries in this region should urgently adopt a joint work plan to control terrorism."

1H. "TERRORIST ATTACK IN MUMBAI: WE CONDEMN THIS DEVILISH ATTACK," an editorial in the November 29 neutral Bangla daily PROTHOM ALO:

"It is known that British and American citizens were the prime targets of this terrorist attack. The immensity of the attack and the death of a few high ranking officials have attached international significance to this incident... The ghastliness and

novelty of this attack damage the peace of mind and feeling of security of all people in South Asia. It is not yet clear who is behind this attack. There are many possible sources of terrorism in India. In addition to Islamist militant activities, there are Hindu extremist groups as well.... Apart from that, separatists are also active in many states. At the same time, the activities of foreign agencies are also not above suspicion in the backdrop of post 9/11 international terrorist networks. All quarters should abstain from blaming each other without sufficient evidence. A proper investigation to discover the identity of the perpetrators and their collaborators is vital for this region as well as the rest of the world."

II. "MUMBAI SIEGE CONTINUES: INDO-PAK INTELLIGENCE TO COOPERATE" editorial in the November 29 neutral English daily THE DAILY STAR:

"We believe that this is the first sign of a constructive engagement between Pakistan and India, which sharply contrasts with the pattern of accusation and denial the two countries pursued in the past. We hope this time around the call for cooperation will be seen and utilized in earnest by both countries to fight a common enemy -- terrorism....

We hope the latest terrorist attack in Mumbai has left governments in other South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, wiser than before, as we have witnessed the manifestation of many home-grown terrorist outfits in the region. Pakistan is paying a heavy price today for not having acted early against its home-grown militant groups. We said yesterday and we say it again that Bangladesh should not suffer from the illusion that it is immune to such terrorist attacks.... Politicians from the two major parties must work together to fight the menace without ever using them to materialize their selfish interests, regardless of the outcome of the coming election. We have to be preemptive in dealing with the armed militants without giving them the opportunity to strike first."

JJ. "THE CARNAGE IN MUMBAI," another editorial in the November 28

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neutral English daily THE DAILY STAR:

"The fact that the attacks have been so coordinated and so easily carried out clearly raises the fear that not only India and Pakistan but the region as a whole is now in a state of severe vulnerability.... It has been a sad day not only for Indians but also for people across the world and especially for us in South Asia.... On a bigger scale, South Asian stability is at stake."

KK. "WE CONDEMN THIS NASTIEST TERRORIST ATTACK ON MUMBAI," an editorial in the November 29 pro-U.S. Bangla daily ITTEFAQ:

"We severely condemn this attack against humanity. The attackers who rushed to kill innocent and helpless people with modern arms, whatever the reasons behind their anger, cannot receive the support of peace-loving people of this world. The people of this world will also have to understand that an eye for an eye will not resolve political problems. We must learn why the attackers are ready to sacrifice their lives. We think that world leaders need to consider things in a new light."

LL. "WE MOURN THE DEAD OF MUMBAI," an editorial in the November 28 left-leaning English newspaper NEW AGE:

"It is also important to note that India's terrorism problem, as with anywhere else, is not exclusively a law and order issue, and the government may fail if it seeks to contain it with more sophisticated weapons and more draconian laws. In fact, political establishments across South Asia, including Bangladesh, find themselves in a similar dilemma, struggling to contain the increasing incidence of bombings and attacks from radicalized groups. Such terrorist attacks, as explained by many respected political scientists, are often violent reactions to longstanding neglect of certain political, economic and ideological grievances endured by the dominated sections of the population."

[1](#)M. "MUMBAI CARNAGE; PERPETRATORS MUST BE PUNISHED," and editorial in the November 28 pro-U.S. English daily THE INDEPENDENT:

"Criminal minds work in an archaic way and they fail to appreciate the basic law that human life is the most precious gift of all in this world. The whole world stands united in its firm resolve to fight hand in hand to bring to an end once and for all the evil forces of terrorism. The perpetrators of the latest Mumbai attack must be brought to justice."

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